

## Red Over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians

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influence only among the whites who had anointed them. Surely this goes too far. Moreover, only about .0003 per cent of the total black population was examined for this study, so it is doubtful that we can ascertain who the "real" leaders were from such a narrow sample. Another caveat may be entered here. "Radical" and "emigrationist" are not necessarily interchangeable terms. Nor are "representative colored men" and "conservatives." The radicals of the 1870s, if not the 1970s, were integrationists who advanced the then revolutionary proposition that black people should be incorporated into American life. Separatists are neither radical nor conservative; they simply withdraw.

In the end, the Exodusters' faith that a new life could be found in the sanctuary of the West turns out to be more a manifestation of their determination to get ahead in this world, than incipient black nationalism. The true significance of the Exodusters focuses on their rejection of white racist demands that blacks conform to the subhuman stereotypes imposed upon them. Distractions aside, *Exodusters* offers informative reading for all, and constitutes a limited, but nonetheless important, contribution to the field.

—Ronald L. Lewis  
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*Red over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians*, by R. Halliburton, Jr. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977. pp. x, 219. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$15.95.

When Europeans first landed on the shores of America, they inadvertently introduced the institution of black slavery to the Cherokees of the southeastern United States. These Indians had practiced involuntary servitude years before the arrival of Europeans, but black slavery provided an opportunity that the sophisticated Cherokees could exploit economically. As the Europeans confiscated Cherokee land, the natives found it expedient to alter their lifestyle from a hunting culture to a novel sedentary society. Black slavery accommodated this new pattern of living.

Halliburton, in this survey, depicts how the institution of black slavery grew in the Cherokee Nation, reaching its apex at the Civil War. The author contends that by this time Cherokee slaveholding "was a microcosm of the 'peculiar institution' that existed in the southern United States." (p. x)

Halliburton recounts the origins of black slavery in the Cherokee Nation, illustrating how the Indians recognized the economic profitability of the institution and readily adopted it. As they were forced to abandon their traditional communal lifestyle and become individual farmers, the Cherokees assimilated the techniques of the southern planter, and some Indian men, such as James Vann and John Ross, became extremely successful. When coerced to move West, Cherokee slaveholders took their chattel with them. Among the Cherokee, slavery was an ancient institution.

Halliburton uses a balanced number of primary and secondary sources to prove his thesis, and he skillfully marshals his facts to show that the Cherokees emulated the southern plantation system. The addition of timely illustrations and informative appendixes greatly supplement this work, which should be of interest to most students of American history.

—**Timothy A. Zwink**  
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## Notes on Contributors

**Gary Gildner** is the author of five books of poetry: *First Practice*, *Digging for Indians*, *Nails*, *The Runner*, and *Letters from Vicksburg*; and is co-editor with Judith Gildner of *Out of This World: Poems from the Hawkeye State*.

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**Philip D. Jordan**'s books and articles confirm his belief that history should be written with accuracy and style. His recently published *Catfish Bend—River Town and County Seat* is a highly readable blend of scholarly interpretation and entertaining narrative.

**Glenda Riley**'s special interest is women's history. She teaches courses on the subject at the University of Northern Iowa, and has published several articles and monographs concerning the role women have played in American history. She is a regular contributor to *The Annals*.

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